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E. RACICOT'S

Speech to his constituents, at West Farnham,
Saturday, Nov. 1st, 1879.

GENTLEMEN:—The vote which I gave last Wednesday in favor of Mr. Lynch's want of confidence motion may have caused some astonishment among my many sincere friends in this County, and, as the debate in the House was closed rather abruptly before I had an opportunity to explain, I deemed it my duty to give explanations to my constituents as soon as possible. I chose the good town of Farnham as the place of meeting because it is the first stopping place in the County on my return from Quebec, and because, moreover, I cannot forget the generous support, the large majority which I got here, not only from Liberals but also from Conservatives. I therefore, last Thursday, sent from Quebec letters and telegrams to different parts of the County to announce the meeting, and here I am before you to-day.

Gentlemen, you all know that when I consented to become a candidate a year ago last spring, and during the canvass which followed, it was well understood that I was not presenting myself as a thick and thin supporter of the Joly Government; I told you that I disapproved of the DeBoucherville administration, that I justified the dismissal of that administration by the Lieut.-Governor and that I approved of the programme of economy and retrenchment of the Joly Government. But I told you also, distinctly that beyond that I desired to remain completely unfettered so as to judge the future acts and measures of the Government freely and impartially on their own merits, according to the dictates of my own judgment. I would never have accepted the candidature under different conditions. Well, did the Joly Government deserve the confidence of the Province last week? I have by my vote answered that question in the negative. I am satisfied that I was right and I would vote the same way again. It has been for their evident incapacity that I found

fault with them. They were unable, for instance, to abolish the Legislative Council. They knew that by the Constitution they could not carry that measure without the assent of the Councillors themselves, and yet did they ever try to obtain the good-will of the Councillors, to talk to their patriotism, to make some compromise with them to begin with, to get by stratagem what they could not obtain by sheer force, like the General who tries to effect an entrance by going around the citadel when he finds that the front wall is impregnable? Not a bit of it. Did they suggest any practical way to get out of the difficulty. Not one. Their intention was good enough, but they apparently did not know how to do it. In order to carry on the affairs of the country successfully the members of a Government must not only be honest, but they must also be capable men; it must be a combination of honesty and ability. One of the two qualities is not enough. The inmates of the Lunatic Asylum at Beauport can hardly be said to be dishonest. During the last session, particularly towards the end in August, any one could easily see that I had no great admiration for the geniuses who were at the head of our Provincial affairs: a few of my votes then were certainly not very complimentary to them. Some of my friends will remember the expression I used (among ourselves) when I was out of patience at some particularly weak doings of the Ministry (and that occurred often enough, God knows) and that was: "*Nous sommes sous le regne des imbeciles.*" But, still I do not know but they were better than the others. I inclined to the belief that they were the least of two evils; I did not want the old crew back again. And so the session dragged on until I paired off about the 20th of August and came back home pretty well disgusted with politics in general and with Ministers of the Crown

in particular. But in a short while matters got worse. Our worthy Legislative Councillors thought fit to refuse (to suspend, as they called it.) the supplies; the machinery was stopped, there was no oil for the wheels. This was adding insult to injury. Not only were they unwilling to abolish themselves, but they turned the tables completely on their enemies and practically tried to abolish them, (and eventually succeeded). Now, this was too much; although I was far from thinking the Government perfect, I thought that we of the Assembly, the representatives elected by the people, could attend to the supplies ourselves and that the Legislative Council, though they had the constitutional power to stop the supplies, had no business to interfere. They were useless before and I desired to get rid of them for the sake of economy; but now they had become mischievous. They were and are, in my humble opinion, a perfect nuisance. But how were we to get rid of them? I put that question in French and English at the Bedford meeting before Joly and his colleagues, but no one answered. They then evidently did not know how. When we met again at Quebec last Tuesday the Province was in a frightful crisis; the supplies were withheld by the Council, public business was at a standstill; the school grants and everything was stopped. Some way must be found out of the difficulty; the dead-lock must be ended and I therefore waited anxiously to see what proposition the Government was going to make to overcome the opposition of the Legislative Council. It was then that the Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec made his famous motion, which, after stating certain well known facts, simply suggested to protest against the action of the Council, and contained at the tail end the gift of an unlimited credit to our Ministers. I felt at once that I could not support such a proposition, for what was the good of protesting against the Council. We might have kept protesting till dooms-day; that did not amount to anything. And we were asked moreover to authorize our Ministers to spend our public money just as they pleased, to suit themselves! That motion alone, therefore, was a pretty hard

pill to swallow. But when my old friend Lynch, seconded by one on our own side of the House, the talented member for Gaspé, proposed in amendment, while abandoning nothing of the rights and privileges of the people, to form a stronger Government by uniting the moderate men together in a noble and patriotic endeavor to put an end to the dead-lock and to carry on together the affairs of the Province economically and successfully. I felt that this motion had the true ring in it, that this was what the Province wanted and that we could now have a glimpse of more happy times. In fact how could I consistently vote against that motion of conciliation? Have I not repeatedly in the House during my first session and also this summer, begged of my colleagues, on both sides, to unite together, to put an end to those deplorable party strifes, which did no good, and to work together harmoniously for the welfare of the Province? That motion met my views and I voted for it, although it was not pleasant to leave those around me with whom I had acted in the past. It was a painful separation, but I put my duty before personal considerations and I may add that, up to the moment my vote was given, not one member on the opposite side, not even Mr. Lynch, with whom I was almost continually during the adjournments, knew how I was going to vote.

I have been called a traitor, a renegade. Well, gentlemen, I assure you frankly that those accusations, though they make me feel somewhat sorry, leave no deep wound in my heart. I am not angry against my accusers, but I pity them because I know that they speak on the impulse of the moment, before they think, before they know the motives of my vote, and I am confident that they will deeply regret those unfair and cruel accusations when they understand all about it. Treason is an easy word to speak but are those who accuse me sure that I am really guilty of treason in the present case. If I am, then I must have suddenly become a great scoundrel for I don't feel the least remorse of conscience. I am as light-hearted and as happy as I ever was, perhaps more so; I would vote again that way a thousand times over.

What is treason convince confidence in the interests had vote, noxious, advantage men, I would to my country, ageous even would feel now, if I gentlemen elections disapproval followed back from of August, ties, with the public those inces crimination burden, the field and with polit have chang strong hope that this is for the Pro I can help try; I shall living; and have to do votes; but now, until Gentleme new admin members; fi house, and our views a Then we ha reputation (not a very treasurer, j esteem whi Lynch, even politically, will do the country, is t He and I ha good many y many hard but our per been disturbe

What is it that might be called treason in this case. If being convinced as I was that this want of confidence motion of Mr. Lynch was what the interest of the Province required, I had voted against it because it was obnoxious to the vanity or the personal advantage of the Ministers, then, gentlemen, I would have been a traitor, traitor to my conscience, to my duty, to my country. I thank God that I was courageous enough to vote as I did, for I would feel dreadfully ashamed of myself now, if I had voted the other way. And, gentlemen, I shall at the next general elections call for your approbation or disapprobation of the course which I followed on this occasion; when I came back from Quebec, about the latter part of August, I felt so disgusted with politics, with the unsatisfactory way that the public business was carried on, with those incessant personal attacks and recriminations which made public life a burden, that I had decided to leave the field and to have nothing more to do with politics; but now, gentlemen, I have changed my mind; I have now a strong hope that matters will be righted, that this is the dawn of a prosperous era for the Province, and I believe now that I can help to do some good for my country; I shall be a candidate again, if I am living; and if you don't want me, all you have to do will be to say so with your votes; but I shall not leave the ship now, until you turn me out.

Gentlemen, I have great hopes in the new administration. It contains two members from the Liberal side of the house, and this will be a guarantee that our views and ideas will be respected. Then we have a treasurer who has the reputation of being rather close-fisted, (not a very bad quality for a Provincial treasurer, just now). You know the esteem which I always had for Mr. Lynch, even when we did not agree politically, but the man who, I hope, will do the most for the good of the country, is the present Prime Minister. He and I have known each other for a good many years; we have had a good many hard knocks together politically; but our personal friendship has never been disturbed for one instant. I have

heard accusations of corruption or dishonesty made against him, but I never saw the proof of any; he also has been called hard names; but I have always tried to believe every man innocent, until I had satisfactory proof of his guilt. I don't believe that any good results come from that unfortunate habit which we have of recklessly dragging our political adversaries in the mud. I have been of opinion that Mr. Chapleau had made mistakes; I said so in the House and out of the House; but I am happy to say that I never accused him of any personal dishonesty, no more than I would now stoop to accuse Mr. Joly, or any of his colleagues of dishonesty, no more than in April, 1878. I would consent to take stock in an accusation of that kind, which was then suddenly made against my adversary; but it is as to ability that Mr. Chapleau has no superior; a better orator, a harder working and more experienced politician cannot be found in the Province of Quebec, in my opinion, and I am not alone of that opinion, like a piece of gold, the more you rub him, the brighter he is. Why then should I refuse to give him a fair and independent support? Why should I imagine that he will be mean enough to use his great talent otherwise than for the good of his country.

Gentlemen, if I had not already detained you so long, I might give you some other reasons which go incidentally to show that the usefulness of the Joly administration had ceased to exist, when they resigned. Let me allude *en passant*,—to that old federal account, out of which the late treasurer managed to squeeze half a million of dollars to help to make the ends meet last year; you must not forget that Mr. McKenzie is not in power any longer at Ottawa; don't you think that if we are going to apply for another round sum, our chances are a good deal better with a Quebec Administration, friendly to the present Ottawa Government?—to the proposed sale of the Q. M. O. & O. Railroad to the Federal Government to form a link of the Pacific railroad; this is very much to be desired to lighten the burden of your Provincial debt, but don't you think again that Mr. Chapleau can ob-

tain much more favorable terms than Mr. Joly from the present Ottawa Administration?—to the understanding which will probably be arrived at with the Legislative Council to amend its constitution, with a view sooner or later to obtain its ultimate extinction etc. Why, gentlemen, is it not evident that since the downfall of the McKenzie Government a year ago last September, and more particularly since the dismissal of Lieutenant Governor Letellier, (which I opposed to the best of my ability), the existence of the Joly Administration had become almost impossible? They might continue pluckily,—like a courageous swimmer, to try to swim against the current; but it was of no earthly use; their fate was sealed.

Let us heartily hope that the patriotic efforts of the peace-makers will be crowned with success; let us forget the past with its strifes, its hatred, its stifling animosities; let by-gones be by-gones; let us all unite together, all the moderate men of the Province, to support an honest and able government; which will be strong enough to carry on the affairs of the Province, without being compelled to yield to the barnacles, the axe grinders and the wire-pullers. There are extreme men in all countries, who will never listen to peace or conciliation; in France they call those fire-eaters, "*les communards*" "*les Ir-reconciliables*." It is rumored that we are threatened with that plague in this Province and that it will very appropriately call itself "*le parti des Enrages*;" but I hope that they will be too weak and too ridiculous to do much harm.

